

300 FRENCH REVOLUTION AS A WORLD FORCE

The initial demand for equality of rights led by rapid stages to the formulation of the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people. The King had been assumed to be the champion of his subjects against feudal oppression. When, however, he emerged rather as the enemy than the patron of the political and social reformation, the notion that sovereignty resided in the people and its authorized representatives spread with the rapidity of a prairie fire. Theoretical royalism lingered on till the flight to Varennes convinced France that her ruler had ceased to belong to the nation, and that at last she must act for herself.

The French people had become self-conscious in their victorious struggle with the Crown and its advisers, but no sooner was it at an end than a new conflict arose. The principles of '89 were a challenge to all the Great Powers in Europe; and though we need not argue with Ranke that an armed collision was inevitable, it would have required exceptional self-control on both sides to avoid. The proximate cause of the war was the gathering of the *emigres* in the Rhineland, which with the assent of its German rulers they used as a base for their counter-revolutionary operations. When war was declared in March 1792 at the instigation of Brissot, the Girondin leader, his policy was resisted by Robespierre and other Jacobin chiefs. When, however, the first skirmishes revealed the weakness of the French troops, and when the Duke of Brunswick launched his brutal Manifesto, marched into France and captured Verdun, the monarchy was overthrown and the nation rose in its might to hurl back the invader. Men only realise how dearly they love their country when it is threatened or visited by some overwhelming calamity; and now France was summoned to defend not

only the soil of
the fatherland but the precious conquests of the
Revolution.

In a remarkable forecast in his reply to Burke in
1791 Macintosh
foretold that, if an anti-revolutionary alliance
were to be
formed, it would have no other effect in France
than to animate
patriotism and banish division, while failure
would set in
motion forces that would subvert the old
governments of
Europe.

While patriotism is) as old as the instinct of
human associa-
tion, nationalism as an articulate creed issued
from the volcanic
fires of the French Revolution. The tide of battle
turned at
Valmy; and on the evening after the skirmish
Goethe, who
had accompanied his friend and master, Karl
August of